Pam China

QUICK INFORMATION SERIES

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY UNION

CHINA

1. The Wonderful Empire

THE vast empire of China comprises more than 4,000,000 square miles of territory. It would spread all over the United States and cover nearly two thirds of North America. The four divisions of the empire are Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet and the Eighteen Provinces, which latter is the portion commonly known as China.

China is wonderful in its physical conditions. It has magnificent river systems, two of which, the Yangtse and the Hoangho, compare with the Mississippi, the Amazon and the Congo in extent. It has lofty mountains, deep and fertile valleys and extensive plains. Its climate is healthy, its soil productive, its fruits various and abundant.

More wonderful than the country itself is the vast, unmeasured sea of China's millions of humanity, which have surged through the empire since centuries before the Christian era. Compilers of statistics strive in vain to count these millions, or to make us comprehend their extent. It is safe to say that China proper contains more than five times as many people as the United States, and the population of the whole empire is estimated at 400,000,000.

2. The People

The Chinese are proud of their country, their customs and their history. They claim the oldest authentic history of

any nation, going back to 2,800 years B.C. They have always had a written language, a literature and a great admiration for learning.

There is no caste in China; human sacrifices have never been offered there, nor vice worshiped, as in some pagan nations. The government is almost purely paternal, and nominally all the land belongs to the emperor.

In social life the position of women is degraded. They are secluded, maimed by footbinding, and almost slaves in the household. A result of this is the dreadful practise of destroying female children, which is still common, though done more secretly than formerly.

3. Religions

There are three nominal religions in China: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

Confucianism is the system of morals taught by the great philosopher, Confucius. It has a very strong hold on the Chinese in its doctrine of the worship of ancestors.

Buddhism was introduced into China in our first century. From it come the deadly apathy and pessimism of the East, and the degrading belief that the souls of human beings may have a future existence in the bodies of beasts.

Taoism is, in theory, a system of moral philosophy. Practically, it means spirit worship and the practise of a great variety of superstitious rites.

Buddhism has its images of Buddha; Confucianism has no idols; while the Taoist temples are filled with them. These religions are not definitely separated, but all are often accepted by the same persons. "The Chinese support the priests of all religions, and worship in all their temples."

Thus the stupendous problem of the gospel in China stands revealed: it must meet the contemptuous pride of the learned class; it must overcome the inertia, falsehood and superstition of three great religious systems; it must work in a society where women are degraded, where child murder is not a crime, and where the opium curse has set its blight upon the home.

4. Beginnings of Mission Work

As long ago as the early part of the sixth century the Nestorians came to China, and formed churches in several cities. In 1288 the Roman Catholics came, and had considerable success until the edict of expulsion against Christians in 1767. The pioneer of modern Protestant missions to China was Robert Morrison, who came to Canton in 1807.

5. Baptist Missions in China

Beginnings in Siam

There are many strange facts in the history of our missions, and one of them is that our mission to China began in Siam. The mission to the Siamese was established at Bangkok in 1833; but though the work was carried on in the Siamese language, the first converts were three Chinese, among whom there promised to be more success than among the Siamese.

South China Mission

Thus Siam proved to be the open door to China. Our missionaries went first to Bangkok, but the call of the great empire with its millions that needed the gospel was too clear to be disregarded, and our workers began to go to China and to plan broadly for the work of the gospel there.

The South China Mission was begun in 1846. Its central station is Swatow, in the province of Kwangtung. This is the province to which the great city of Hongkong formerly belonged, and it also contains the district of Canton, from which come most of the Chinese who are seen in America. We have now six mission stations in the South China Mission, including Bangkok.

East China Mission

Our East China Mission is located in the Chekiang Province. This work was begun at Ningpo in 1843, and it is therefore our oldest established mission in China. There are five central stations in this mission.

West and Central China Missions

The great rivers of the Orient have often become the highways of the gospel. It was because of the mighty Yangtse

that it was possible to establish a mission in western China, 2,000 miles up the river. Work was begun at Suifu in 1889, and two other stations have since been established.

The Central China Mission is at the great city of Hanyang, nearly 700 miles up the Yangtse, and in the very heart of the empire. It was established in 1893, and is a connecting link between the East and the pioneer work in the far West.

6. Results of Missions

We have been at work for China more than seventy years, and the good that has been accomplished cannot be told by statistics.

It has been shown that in spite of the three religions the heart of the people is not at rest; they long for the peace which Christ alone can give. "We wish you would stay here and teach us," said some women to our missionaries; "what you say is good, but we want to know more about it." Even the children in our mission schools learn to sing "Jesus Loves Me," and they know what it means, too. A little boy who was sick unto death there said to the missionary, "No, I am not afraid, for I know that Jesus loves me, and is taking care of me."

Our medical work is the "pictorial language of the gospel." In it the Chinese see the true doctrine of Jesus, for nowhere else could the unfortunate be so helped. And above all, among our many converts some have stood firm amid persecution even unto death, and others have developed Christian character worthy of the apostolic age.

"When China is converted, one half of the heathen world will have been conquered for Christianity."

Contributions for the work of the American Baptist Missionary Union may be sent to any of the District Secretaries, or to the Treasurer, Mr. Chas. W. Perkins, Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass.

Address the Literature Department, American Baptist Missionary Union, Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass., for the following:—

Extra copies of this leaflet for free distribution.

An historical leaflet on "Missions in China." Price, 5 cents.

A free catalogue, giving a list of general literature on China.

A copy of the Annual Report (postage 5 cents) and the Handbook of the Missionary Union, both of which give the latest statistics, and are essential to the most intelligent knowledge of our work and workers.

1 Ed. 25M 4-04.